

# Keeping sewage *in its place*

**Keeping sewer pipes clean and operational avoids frustrating and messy plumbing clogs, protects the ocean, safeguards public health and the environment, and prevents expensive plumbing repairs.**

## Who is responsible?

Homeowners are responsible for the sewer pipe from the home to the street, called a lateral. The city is accountable for the sewer pipe once the sewage leaves the lateral. Responsibilities include maintenance, repairs and overflow cleanup and damages.

## The number one problem

Build up of fat, oil and grease in sewer pipes is the number one cause of sewage spills. Only water should go down the drain; food and grease should not. Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out the plumbing system and detergents only temporarily cut grease. Grease congeals further down the pipe, ground up food builds up and a clog forms.

## Follow these simple steps to avoid clogs:

- Put a strainer in the sink drain and empty solids into the trash.
- Use your garbage disposal sparingly and do not rely on grease cutting detergents to wash away grease.
- Wipe cooking pan residue with a paper towel and throw it in the trash.
- Collect fat, oil and grease into a plastic container such as a milk jug or coffee can and throw it in the trash.
- Mix small amounts of fat, oils and grease with absorbent waste such as kitty litter, coffee grounds, shredded newspaper or paper towels before discarding in the trash.
- Dispose of larger amounts of used cooking oil responsibly and for free. Call Waste Management at 760-929-9400 or Clean Harbors at 800-444-4244 for more information.

## Surprising other culprits

Invasion of tree and shrub roots into sewer pipes cause nearly half of the city's pipe overflows each year. Roots search for water and nutrients and enter pipes through small cracks. Trees and bushes should be planted at a distance from pipes.

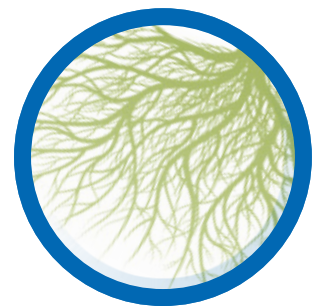
Disposable wipes, even flushable ones, can also clog sewer lines. Throw wipes as well as dental floss, feminine hygiene products and paper towels in the trash, and not in toilets.

## A regular cleaning

Costly repairs can also be avoided with regular sewer lateral cleaning. Ideally, a lateral should be professionally cleaned annually to remove built up debris. Televised pipe inspections should be considered every three to five years to ensure pipe integrity.



*Put fat, oil and grease  
in the trash, **only**  
**water** down the drain.*



**For more information please visit [www.carlsbadca.gov/sewer](http://www.carlsbadca.gov/sewer) or call 760-438-2722.**